

VISITING TEAM MEMBER ORIENTATION MANUAL

**New Hampshire Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
Case Study Compliance Review**

2012-2013

NH Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
101 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH 03301
603-271-3494 www.ed.state.nh.us



Southeastern Regional Education Service Center, Inc.
29 Commerce Drive, Bedford NH 03110-6835
603-206-6800 www.seresc.net



<p style="text-align: center;">VISITING TEAM MEMBER ORIENTATION MANUAL NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW</p>
--

Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to serve on a New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) Special Education Case Study Compliance Review Visiting Team. Your professional role and experience will bring important technical assistance and information to the school's administration and staff. We appreciate your time and participation in this essential NHDOE Compliance Review process.

This orientation manual will provide you with information on the Case Study Compliance Review Process and on your role as a visiting team-member. It is our hope that you will read this manual and the enclosed forms prior to the visit. Please bring the forms with you to the visit. We look forward to our work together.

What is the Role of SERESC?

The Southeastern Regional Education Service Center (SERESC) is contracted by the NHDOE to conduct Special Education Program Approval Processes for public and non-public special education approved schools. Specifically, the Case Study Process for non-public schools and the Focused Monitoring Process for public schools.

The SERESC Special Education Program Approval Management Team consultants work together with the Bureau of Special Education to administer the process and activities and provide technical assistance and oversight to the school administration and staff. As a Visiting Team member you will be working with one or more of the Management Team members assigned to the non-public school.

What is a Case Study?

Case studies provide an in-depth review of the randomly selected students' academic and behavioral programs provided and progress made while at the non-public school. The Case Study is specifically focused on the following three areas:

- ❖ Access to the general curriculum
- ❖ Transition
- ❖ Behavior strategies and discipline

The Case Study presentation is prepared by the non-public school team and includes a profile of the student's educational background, a visual graph of progress made on an IEP goal and in-depth information on the student's participation and progress in the three focus areas.

The non-public school team will prepare the Case Study information prior to the visit and present the student profile, their responses to the Case Study questions and supporting evidence for each question to the Visiting Team. The school members who are part of the student's team will take part in the development of the case study presentation and, whenever possible, participate in the case study presentation.

Each Case Study presentation will be followed by a discussion with the presenters and the visitors to fill in any gaps in the student's story and provide clarification or further documentation, when necessary. These discussions help deepen their understanding of the student and the quality of the work being done at the school to support that student.

What is a Focused Review?

A focused review permits the Department of Education to leverage its impact for change and improvement within schools statewide by focusing the attention of all educators on three key areas of critical importance in the education of students with disabilities. The three areas that the Department of Education has determined to be in need of improvement are:

- ❖ Access to, Participation and Progress in the General Curriculum
- ❖ Transition Planning and Services
- ❖ Behavior Strategies and Discipline

In their case study presentations, case study teams will demonstrate evidence of their practice and compliance with state and federal special education rules and regulations in these key areas. If, during your visit, you should encounter an issue of non-compliance or a suggestion for improvement that is outside the scope of the focus areas, you should note it to be included in the final building summary of the visit.

Access to, Participation and Progress in the General Curriculum: As a result of IDEA 2004 Amendments to the Special Education Law, students are guaranteed Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) ensuring access to the general curriculum in the least restrictive learning environment (LRE). This means that students with disabilities (SWD) are ensured access to the same curriculum standards as their non-disabled peers, and, to the maximum extent possible, they are entitled to instruction within the same setting as their non-disabled peers.

Transition Services and Planning: Transitions in a student's educational experience occur frequently and require careful planning so as not to interrupt the student's progress. Additionally, state and federal special education rules and regulations require documentation of transition planning at key points in the special education process. During the Case Study Compliance Review Process, educators are asked to examine documentation of the transitions from Early Supports and Services to entering school, moving from grade to grade, program to program, or school to school as relevant. Additionally for students who turn age 14 during the IEP, there must be a statement of the transition service needs. By age 16 there must be evidence of transition planning that is a results-oriented process, focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate his or her movement from school to post-school goals and activities. Student attendance at such team meetings will also be reviewed.

Behavior Strategies and Discipline: Behaviors by a student with educational disabilities that affect his/her ability to learn require positive intervention strategies and supports, and thus specialized staff training and planning, in order for the student to function and learn successfully in the least restrictive environment. The case study process examines the procedures, strategies, training, planning and supports provided to students with educational disabilities who are in need of them. Interviews with administrators will elicit information about the school's philosophy, policies and procedures with regard to behavior interventions and discipline practice.

How is the Case Study Compliance Review a Collaborative Process?

During the preparation of the case studies, the evidence gathering process involves all school personnel who work with that student. Special and general educators, related service personnel, as well as students, paraprofessionals and parents as appropriate, respond to the questions on the Data Collection Form prior to the visit. This collaboration provides an opportunity for the in-house team to reflect on the effectiveness of the student's program

Additionally the Case Study Compliance Review is structured to promote collaboration between the non-public school team and the Visiting Team members. Throughout the review activities – case study

presentations and discussions, classroom observations, and interviews – non-public school and Visiting Team members work together as a collaborative team. In this way, information is collaboratively reviewed decisions made with a transparency that provides collective understanding of the findings of non-compliance and areas in need of improvement as well as of the school's strengths identified by the process.

What Does the Two-Day Schedule Consist of?

Orientation

The morning of the Case Study visit, the Visiting Team members will be provided an overview of the Case Study Process by the Program Approval Technical Assistant and an orientation to the school by school's administration.

The overview of the Case Study Process will include a review of the role for Visiting Team members, the schedule, and time to answer any questions you may have after reading this manual. The orientation will take about an hour usually followed by a tour of the school building(s).

Case Study Presentation

Case Study presentations will provide evidence regarding the student's experience and progress in the three Focus Areas. You will receive a copy of the completed Case Study Data Collection Form for each presentation. A copy of the IEP and other relevant documents will be available for review. There will be an opportunity to ask questions about the student's programming and clarify any questions you have about the evidence collected on the student by the staff. The case study presentation and follow-up discussion will take about one hour to complete.

At the conclusion of each case study presentation, the presenters and visitors will complete the Data Collection Form by determining if each area of compliance has been met at the end of each section.

Interviews

You will interview the parents of the students of each case study either in person or by phone. You will also interview the student if appropriate. Staff members may accompany you in each of the interviews you conduct. Included in this packet are the interview forms for each of these interviews. Please use the forms only as guides, and do not feel obligated to get responses to every question. Rephrase the questions as necessary to fit the flow of the conversation. The interviews should each take about ½ hour.

Classroom Observations

You will be asked to observe the student of each case study within the classroom setting. Prior to the observation, please be sure to review the student's IEP. In this packet is a Classroom Observation form to assist you in taking notes on your classroom assessment. Your purpose in the observation is to observe the student and the supports s/he is receiving, his/her interaction with peers, his/her level of engagement, etc. in as unobtrusive a manner as possible.

Building Level Compliance Data Summary

Finally, you, your visitor colleagues and members of the school staff will collaborate in completing the Building Level Compliance Data Summary. Since this document, along with the summaries from the other buildings, will provide the basis for the report prepared by the Chair of the Case Study Compliance Review, it is important that the summary include all of the central findings of the Case Study Process. Information from classroom observations and interviews needs to be shared and integrated into the building summary. **We suggest that you keep this report in mind throughout your 2-day visit, and keep a running list of observed strengths and possible suggestions for improvements to bring to the discussion at this summary meeting.**

Report Out

The final activity of your visit will be a report out of the general findings to the school staff. You will be asked to provide a brief oral report on your team's findings – building strengths and suggestions for improvement.

Confidentiality

In order to protect the confidentiality of each of the students involved in the case studies, we ask that all forms and school data – observation, interview and portfolio information – be placed in a single envelope with the school's name on it.

Other Forms

You will be asked to complete a mileage form to compensate you for your travel during the visit and a reactionnaire form to provide us with feedback on ways to improve the program approval process.

Professional Development

In the packet you will receive at the visit, you will find a professional development clock-hour certificate to credit you for your participation time.

Final Report

The Chair will use the collected data in the building envelopes to prepare a final report on the visit. The State Director of Special Education will issue an approval letter to the school with the length of approval identified.

Enclosed Forms

Included with this manual for your review are the following forms, which will be used in the Case Study Compliance Review Process:

- ❖ Data Collection Form
- ❖ Building Summary Form
- ❖ Classroom Observation Form
- ❖ Parent, Student and Leadership Interview Forms

Many Thanks

The NH Department of Education Special Education Program Approval Team members express appreciation to you for your willingness to participate in this essential work on behalf of students with educational disabilities. Your gift of professional and personal time is going to help a NH non-public school improve its delivery of special education services. We are looking forward to working with you to improve special education in New Hampshire.

**Please bring this manual and all of the Program Approval forms
with you to the orientation/training.**